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Remarks Prepared for Delivery by Secretary of Defense William J. Perry
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Two thousand years ago, the Roman poet Horace wrote, "Force without wisdom falls of its own weight." In the past two months, the United States has deployed its armed forces in two major contingency operations -- Haiti and the Persian Gulf. We were successful in both cases because our use of force was guided by wisdom.

Tonight, I want to talk about the thinking behind our decisions about where and how to use force in the post-Cold War world. With the world in flux, and crises requiring a U.S. response emerging around the globe, we have to think clearly about how to use our military. The complexity and diversity of the situations we face require flexibility, hard choices, and sound judgment. In short, wisdom.

I start with this fundamental fact: the United States will remain a global power. We have global interests because of our historical ties throughout the world and the importance of the international economy to our prosperity. Protecting our interests requires us to have security commitments around the globe. As President Clinton has said, "As the world's greatest power, we have an obligation to lead, and at times, when our interests and our values are sufficiently at stake, to act."

But fact number two is that most of the current and foreseeable threats to our interests today do not threaten the survival of the United States. Contrast this to World War II and the Cold War.

In World War II, we faced totalitarian states bent on world domination. It was easy to state our objective. It was victory. Indeed, it was total victory. We used all of the power available to us to achieve that, up to and including nuclear weapons, which we were just developing.

During the Cold War, we faced an ideologically driven nuclear superpower hostile to democratic states. Our objective then also was easy to state. We wanted to deter an attack from the forces of the Soviet Union, and prevent a nuclear holocaust. During the height of the Cold War, the Russian physicist Andrei Sakharov said, "Reducing the risk of annihilating humanity in a nuclear war carries an absolute priority over all other considerations." And it did during the Cold War. We had total commitment to nuclear deterrence.

Today, the problems we face are more complex and very different. The Soviet Union, which dominated almost every aspect of America's security strategy, is gone. In its place, new countries have been born all across Eurasia. All of them are struggling -- struggling to become democracies, struggling to develop market economies, and struggling to develop multi-ethnic societies.

And across the globe, "ethnicity" -- what Daniel Moynihan once called the "great hidden force" of our age -- is hidden no more. It rips old states apart, and causes the sometimes violent birth of new ones. In short, these past few years have changed the security equation around the world.

As Secretary of Defense in this new security environment, I've defined my task in terms of three challenges.

The first challenge is to take every action we can to prevent a reemergence of the nuclear threat that attended the Cold War. There are still 25,000 nuclear weapons in the lands of the former Soviet Union. Andrei Sakharov's injunction still holds here. But the means we use to achieve it are different. Today, we're focusing on reducing this arsenal. Secretary Christopher is directing our diplomacy to nail down the gains we've already achieved in reducing the nuclear threat and to keep it from reemerging.

And in the Defense Department, we're using our resources and expertise to help the Russians and the other nuclear states of the former Soviet Union dismantle nuclear weapons, convert their defense industries to commercial production, and reform the former Red Army. This is what I call "defense by other means."

The second challenge I face is to properly manage the post-Cold War drawdown of our armed forces. Historically, America hasn't been very successful in maintaining ready, capable forces while reducing its military. We failed to do it after World War II. And we weren't ready for the Korean War. We failed to do it after the Vietnam war. And we ended up with a "hollow force." This time we need to get it right so we can be ready for the security problems of an increasingly complex world.

If we don't get the drawdown right, we won't have the necessary military capability to meet the third challenge -- determining how to use force or the threat of force effectively in this complex world.

That's the challenge that I want to focus my attention on this evening because we need to think clearly about the use of U.S. military power. Over the past few months we've used our forces successfully on several occasions. And we are likely to face decisions about the use of force again.

Today, there are three basic categories of cases in which we may use our armed forces. The first is where our vital interests are threatened. The second is where we have important, but not vital, national interests at stake. And the third is where we have humanitarian concerns.

I want to look at each of these in turn because each requires a different level of military response.

A threat falls into the first category of vital interests if it threatens the survival of the United States or key allies, if it threatens critical U.S. economic interests, or if it poses the danger of a future nuclear threat.

If we determine that we face such a threat, we must be prepared to use military force to end that threat. We must be prepared to risk a military conflict to protect our vital interests.

The recent confrontations with Iraq and North Korea involved our vital national interests, since they involved all three threats -- a threat to key allies, to critical economic interests, and a future nuclear danger. In the case of both countries, we pursued preventive diplomacy to address problems without resorting to force. But we also were prepared to use military power to protect vital national interests.

Let me expand on each of these situations in turn. Seventeen months ago, North Korea threatened to withdraw from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. North Korea's pursuit of a nuclear weapons program, coupled with its forward-deployed million-man army and bellicose posture, created a dangerous situation. To deal with the nuclear issue, we began with preventive diplomacy. But late last spring, when North Korea began unloading nuclear fuel from its reactor, it appeared that diplomacy had failed. Consequently, we shifted our strategy to coercive diplomacy, and began moving toward sanctions against North Korea, while at the same time augmenting our defenses in the Republic of Korea.

We clearly understood that these actions increased the risk of conflict. But we believed that it was even more dangerous to allow North Korea to proceed with a large-scale nuclear weapons program. Just as we were about to move forward

with the request for sanctions, the North Koreans told President Carter that they were ready to reopen negotiations aimed at terminating their nuclear program. Those negotiations led to the framework agreement that was signed in Geneva two weeks ago.

The agreement that Ambassador Gallucci reached with the North Koreans is a good deal for the world. It freezes immediately the North Korean nuclear weapons program and provides for the eventual dismantlement of its major nuclear facilities. This takes North Korea well beyond its commitments under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and to the International Atomic Energy Agency. Oliver Cromwell once said, "A man-of-war is the best Ambassador." That's not really quite true. As the negotiations with North Korea proved, the best approach is a good Ambassador backed up by a man-of-war.

Our response to Iraq's recent moves in the Persian Gulf provides another example of the importance of backing up our diplomacy with ready forces. When our vital interests are threatened, and preventive diplomacy fails, we must be prepared to move to coercive diplomacy -- a credible threat to use military force.

Our rapid dispatch of forces to the Persian Gulf was an outstanding example of coercive diplomacy. The powerful air, naval, and ground force we quickly assembled in the area made our threat to respond with force credible. That deterred Saddam and helped avoid another war. It also convinced the Gulf states that we were serious about the security of the region.

While Iraq and North Korea fall into the first category of threats to our vital interests, Haiti and Bosnia fall into the second. This category includes cases where our vital interests are not threatened, but we do have an important stake in the outcome. The second category is much more difficult to deal with than the first because we must weigh the risks against the interests involved and because the threats are not always clear cut.

But we must be willing to consider the use of some level of force commensurate with our interests. We want to influence the outcome in these cases because certain outcomes will advance our interests while others could harm them. But our use of force will be selective and limited, reflecting the relative importance of the outcome to our interests.

We have a whole range of options here. They go from using U.S. military assets for logistical operations, to using U.S. combat forces. The decision of what to use -- whether it's a C-130 transport or an Army division -- will reflect the cost we are willing to pay to achieve the outcome we want. And we have the option of participating in a multinational effort or going it alone.

In Haiti, we were prepared to use force because we have interests in protecting democracy in this hemisphere, preventing the flow of refugees, and putting a halt to a cruel, systematic reign of terror over the Haitian people.

And we did try preventive diplomacy first. We pursued a vigorous diplomatic effort to convince the military leaders in Haiti to return power to the legitimate government. But nothing moved the junta. When we had exhausted all other alternatives, the United States and its allies threatened to use force to remove the junta from power.

In Haiti, this turned out to be sufficient. Coercive diplomacy convinced the junta to sign the agreement to step down. In this case, we not only threatened the use of military power, we were actually in the process of using it to force an entry into Haiti. We had more than 60 aircraft in the air and paratroopers ready to jump. It was then that our use of force became credible to the military leaders in Haiti. Because of our demonstrated resolve to use military power, our armed forces entered Haiti without the loss of Haitian or American lives. And we arrived as friends instead of invaders.

In Bosnia, unlike Haiti, it would take hundreds of thousands of troops and probably significant casualties to impose the outcome we want -- peace. That's a level of blood and treasure that is not commensurate with our national interests. That's not to say we don't have national interests there. We do. First, we have a compelling interest in preventing the war and its consequences from spreading beyond Bosnia. Second, we have a humanitarian interest in trying to limit the violence and relieve suffering while we work for a peace settlement.

These are real interests. And we take them seriously. But they are limited interests. Our actions need to be proportional to these interests.

Can the military help us achieve our objectives in Bosnia? Yes. But we're not about to enter the war as a combatant. We're using selective military power for limited objectives. To keep the conflict from spreading, we've deployed a small infantry unit to Macedonia as part of a U.N. peacekeeping force. And, along with our allies, we're using the military power of NATO to limit the violence and the casualties, in particular civilian casualties, while the process to reach a peace agreement is going on.

NATO's commitment has made a real difference. In the year before the decision to use NATO military power, more than 10,000 people died as a result of the shelling of Sarajevo. In the year since, the number killed can be measured in the hundreds. Our actions have not brought about peace, by any means. But they have significantly limited the violence. Military power is playing a role in saving, not taking, lives.

That's the use of force in the first two categories where we have vital or lesser interests. The third category is where we have humanitarian concerns. Here we are using military forces, as opposed to military force, to meet a specific need. This was the sole objective for our operations in Rwanda and the original purpose of the deployment of forces to Somalia.

Generally, the military is not the right tool to meet humanitarian concerns. The U.S. government has established, ongoing programs to assist international and non-governmental agencies in providing humanitarian relief. Ordinarily, the Defense Department will not be involved in humanitarian operations because of the need to focus on its war-fighting missions. We field an army, not a Salvation Army.

But under certain conditions the use of our armed forces is appropriate. First, if we face a natural or manmade catastrophe that dwarfs the ability of the normal relief agencies to respond. Second, if the need for relief is urgent and only the military has the ability to jump start the effort. Third, if the response requires resources unique to the military. And fourth, if there is minimal risk to the lives of American troops. In humanitarian operations, we only use force to protect our troops or members of humanitarian agencies helping us.

Rwanda is the most recent example where our unique military capabilities were used to respond to a humanitarian crisis. And it met all the conditions for the use of Defense Department capabilities.

The civil war there created a human tragedy of Biblical proportions. Bodies of the dead and dying lined the roads where people fled the fighting. And in the refugee camps, thousands of people were dying from disease and thirst. The tragedy overwhelmed the ability of the normal agencies to cope and required an urgent response.

In the entire world, only the United States military had the capability to conduct a massive airlift, over long distances, on short notice, to bring in the specialized equipment needed to relieve the suffering. And there was minimal risk to the lives of American troops.

Consequently, the Department brought its unique capabilities to bear on the crisis. And we made a difference. U.S. forces brought in food, supplies, and medicine. Most significantly, they brought in the water purification equipment that was the key to checking the cholera outbreak in the camps. The water purification effort helped cut the death rate from 5,000 to per day to a few hundred. We helped stop the dying, and saved tens of thousands of lives. And then we turned the effort over to relief agencies.

Those are the basic categories of cases where we may use our armed forces -- vital national interests, national interests, and humanitarian concerns. Our

interests should dictate where we get involved and the extent of our military involvement. Our level of military involvement must reflect our stakes. At the extreme end of the spectrum, where our vital national interests are at stake, we will use overwhelming force and go it alone if necessary. But where the interest is less, we will be more selective in using force.

We should not shrink from the use of force when it is appropriate. On the other hand, we should not rattle our saber in response to every difficult security situation facing us.

The British novelist Graham Greene wrote to the effect that there is always a moment when the door opens and lets the future in. The end of the Cold War has opened such a door. The future is out there, waiting to come in. By our actions we can shape that future for the benefit of our children and grandchildren.

Thank you very much.

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